GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2301
ANSWERED ON:04.12.2000
CONSTRUCTION OF HOUSES ON FOREST LAND
PRAHLAD SINGH PATEL

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to permit to construct houses on the forest land in the leftist terrorism (Naxalites) infested areas of Madhya Pradesh and other parts of Vananchal areas in the country for development and rehabilitation;

(b) if so, action plan formulated by the Government in this regard; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU)

(a), (b) & (c) The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 was enacted by the Parliament with the object to provide for the conservation of forests and for matters connected therewith or ancillary or incidental thereto. As per the Act diversion of forest land for non-forestry purpose including construction of houses by any State Government or any other authority, is prohibited without the prior approval of the Central Government.

The Central Government as a matter of policy and as per the Para 4.5 of the Guidelines to the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 does not entertain any proposal for diversion of forest land for non site specific purposes like construction of residential or dwelling houses. However, diversion of forest land may be allowed for construction of schools, hospitals/dispensaries, community halls, cooperatives, panchayats, tiny rural industrial sheds of the Government, etc. for the benefit of the people of that area and rehabilitation of families/persons who are relocated from forest areas, where non-forest land for such projects is not available.